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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/04/2018
TAGS: ETTC MCAP PREL PTER MASS GG PL RS
SUBJECT: POLISH MANPADS ALLEGED IN CHECHNYA

REF: MOSCOW 3475

Classified By: Anita E. Friedt, EUR/PRA Office Director.
Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (SBU) This is an action message; please see para 3 below.

¶2. (C) On November 26, Russian MFA DVBR First Secretary Andrey Odnoral passed to Embassy Moscow a nonpaper and video that allege Polish-made MANPADS were discovered in Itum-Kalinsk (Itumkale), Chechnya. The nonpaper requested from the USG any information or materials relating to this alleged incident of illegal trafficking of the Polish MANPADS in the context of implementing the 2005 U.S.-Russian MANPADS Arrangement.

¶3. (C) The GOR claims it not raised this issue with the Georgian or Polish government, but Russian representatives raised it during the December 2-3 Wassenaar meeting plenary in Vienna in a presentation on destabilizing accumulations of conventional arms in conflict zones. The GOR asserted that in 2007, Poland supplied 100 "Grom" MANPADS to Georgia, produced with Russian-manufactured components. The GOR further asserted that Poland re-exported these MANPADS to Georgia without GOR consent, violating GOR export rules.

¶4. (SBU) Action Request: Embassy Warsaw should inform the appropriate Government of Poland (GOP) officials that the Russians have raised with the U.S. the alleged incident of Polish MANPADS trafficked to Chechnya as per the reference. Post should draw upon information in the reference without passing the full text, and should ask for Polish assessment. In particular, Post should highlight Russian claims that Polish MANPADS, originally transferred to Georgia, have been recovered by Russian forces in Chechnya. (Note: Washington notes that the Russians have raised this alleged incident at a time of escalating violence in the Northern Caucasus. Washington wonders whether Russia is raising the alleged incident to continue to argue for an arms embargo against Georgia, criticizing countries that provide weapons to Georgia as undermining regional stability.) Post should also inquire how the Poles plan to respond if the Russians raise this alleged incident during upcoming Polish-Russian Export Control talks on December 9, 2008.

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